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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000748

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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2017

TAGS: PGOV KDEM NI

SUBJECT: NNAMANI PREDICTS FAILED ELECTIONS, INTERIM GOVT

REF: ABUJA 717

Classified By: Ambassador John Campbell for reasons 1.4 (b & d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Senate President Ken Nnamani condemned Nigeria's April 14 elections as neither free, fair, nor credible and anticipated that the April 21 polls would be no better. He complained that the PDP had "gotten greedy" and dangerously attempted to fix the election results to win nearly every state in the federation. This greed, he said, had lead to "justifiable anger" amongst the Nigerian people and to unrest in all six geopolitical zones. Nnamani believes that opposition parties and candidates are beginning to unite and that a total opposition boycott of the April 21 presidential election is possible --if not likely. In any case, the Senate President has ordered the National Assembly (NASS) to reconvene Tuesday April 24. If the elections this weekend are as messy as expected, the NASS may vote next to dissolve INEC and call for fresh elections to be held in several months after a new, non-partisan electoral body is installed. This would require some form of interim national government to be put in place on May 29, when the Constitution requires that President Obasanjo leave office. End Summary.

April 14: Not Free, Fair, or Credible

¶2. (C) In a meeting with Ambassador and Poloff April 18, Senate President Ken Nnamani reported that he has obtained additional information since he last spoke to Poloff about the problems with the Enugu election (reftel). He now believes that the polls were so flawed nation-wide as to be neither free, fair, nor credible. Nnamani is worried about the example that Nigeria is setting for other African nations with elections that are blatantly rigged by the ruling party.

He said that he was disappointed that the PDP got "too greedy" and demanded to win too many states. Nnamani lamented the rigging, because there are many states that the PDP could win legitimately. He argued, however, that the PDP should accept that there are some states it clearly cannot win in a fair race, including Lagos, Kano, and Edo.

¶3. (C) The Senator is very concerned about the outbreaks of violence and arson in all six geopolitical zones. He said that "the Nigerian people are angry, justifiably so" after last weekend's elections. He cited Kano, Ekiti, Kogi, Gombe, and Edo as states which were particularly volatile. Nnamani reported that he has heard from PDP insiders in both

Edo and Oyo states that those elections were truly won by the opposition, despite INEC declarations of results to the contrary.

¶4. (C) Nnamani blamed this anger on the announcement of unbelievable results and a series of INEC failures, especially failures to appropriately use expensive technology. Nnamani noted that INEC promised to use satellite technology to electronically transmit election results from all local government areas (LGAs) to Abuja. However, the necessary technology has only been installed in 100 LGAs and it is not working anywhere. The much-touted direct data capture (DDC) machines that were supposed to eliminate repeat voting and prevent fraud are not being used. Though fingerprints were captured during voter registration, they are not being used to verify voter identity at the polls and no program such as AFIS was run to check for repeat registrants. All that was needed for a good election was political will, the Senate President commented, not millions of dollars spent on useless technology.

PDP Worried about United Opposition

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¶5. (C) Nnamani passed the Ambassador a copy of a draft communique from a coalition of opposition presidential candidates including Atiku and Buhari. (Note: copy was sent by email to AF/W.) In the draft statement, the opposition says that the April 14 polls were a sham and they do not expect that the April 21 polls will be any better. Therefore, they are considering non-participation in the elections. Nnamani noted that if it occurs, such a nation-wide election boycott would be unprecedented in Nigeria. Nnamani was pleased that the opposition gave

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specific examples of incredible election results. For example, the draft statement says that though the total number of registered voters in Anambra is 1.84 million, INEC announced that the PDP alone garnered 1.9 million votes in the state. INEC also claimed 1.8 million people voted in Rivers state, but both the Anambra and Rivers vote figures are higher than the total number of votes reportedly cast in Lagos state, which is not credible. The opposition also points out that results were announced in Abuja while votes were still being counted in Ondo and Delta states, and that the total number of votes reported by INEC in Sokoto state again exceeds the number of registered voters. Because of these irregularities, the opposition calls for postponement of the upcoming elections and the complete reconstitution of INEC. They ask the public to peacefully protest and the National Assembly to reconvene and vote on resolutions condemning the legitimacy of the elections thus far. Though there has been much talk of an opposition boycott, the draft resolution merely states that the opposition will "consider non-participation in the elections."

¶6. (C) According to Nnamani, the PDP is very worried about facing a unified opposition. Governor Yar'Adua has asked to meet with Senator Nnamani on Sunday April 22. Nnamani has accepted the meeting request, though he is not sure what the discussion will be about.

The Way Ahead an Interim Government?

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¶7. (C) Senator Nnamani told the Ambassador that at this point there is nothing more the international community can do to save the upcoming elections. According to the Senate President, "the problem is now in Nigerian hands." He explained that the National Assembly (NASS) will reconvene ahead of schedule on April 24. If the elections this weekend are as messy as expected, the NASS may vote next to censure Chairman Iwu, dissolve INEC, and call for fresh elections to be held in several months after a new, non-partisan electoral body is installed. In order for the new elections to be meaningful, they would have to be organized by a non-partisan

electoral body, but this could not happen before the constitutionally-mandated deadline of April 29th. Therefore, the Senator reasoned, some kind of interim government will have to be installed to shepherd the transition. Nnamani speculated that perhaps he would take over as head of state on May 29 (when Obasanjo's mandate ends) and that the Chief Justice of the Federation would become the ruler on June 4 when Nnamani's own term expires.

¶8. (C) In general, the Senate will seek to make INEC more independent, like the judiciary. Nnamani thinks that all parties should be represented within INEC and that the office of INEC Chairman should be vigorously contested to ensure that the best candidate receives the job. He also hopes that INEC can be made financially independent, as the current body loses much power as it waits on the Villa for funds. Nnamani predicted a revision of the entire 2006 Electoral Act to fix the problems which have become apparent in the past year.

CAMPBELL